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5 February 1965

DCI BRIEFING FOR  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TRENDS

- I. Although we believe foreign policy was not a principal cause of Khrushchev's downfall, the end of his highly personal rule does have important implications for the conduct of future Soviet foreign relations.
  - A. A collective leadership tends to be more conservative and less venturesome, though this does not mean inactivity or an inability to make decisions.
  - B. Thus, the short-term outlook is for a continuation of the main lines of Soviet policy toward the West since the Cuban missile crisis.
  - C. Soviet economic problems will also put some check on an aggressive foreign policy, particularly in Europe.
  - D. The on-going conflict with Communist China will continue to have important consequences for Soviet policy.

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1. On the one hand, it is clear that the Soviets are going to remain opposed to the Chinese position of extreme revolutionary militancy.
  2. On the other hand, Chinese activity in Africa and Asia calls forth competitive Soviet efforts which clash with US interests.
- E. An example of this competition is the unusually strong Soviet delegation headed by Premier Kosygin now en route to North Vietnam.
1. We believe the main purposes of this mission are to regain influence in Hanoi at Chinese expense and to strengthen the Communist deterrent against any US acts which might escalate hostilities in Indochina.
  2. We believe the Soviets may be ready to provide not only a substantial increase in economic aid, but also military equipment which they can define as defensive, including surface-to-air missiles and possibly jet fighters.
  3. In a typical effort to soften the impact of the Kosygin mission on the US, Pravda for the first time has warmly welcomed the President's remarks in his State of the Union message about expanding

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US-Soviet contacts, including a visit  
to the US by the Soviet leaders.

F. Although the new Soviet leaders have reaffirmed Khrushchev's pledge to support Castro, they clearly wish to do what they can to stabilize Cuban-US relations.

1. Castro was reported to have been shaken by Khrushchev's downfall, possibly because he has even less confidence in the new Soviet leaders.
2. This probably will reinforce Castro's caution toward bringing on a direct clash with the US.

G. The Chinese challenge is likely to spur the Soviets to make more strenuous efforts to exploit anti-US movements and political developments in Latin America.

1. However, this prospect of stronger Soviet verbal support for anti-US movements in Latin America probably does not foreshadow important new Soviet political and economic commitments or acceptance of new risks of a clash with US power.